



METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

EXHIBIT E

MBHCP Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** What is a habitat conservation plan (H.C.P.)?
- A.** An H.C.P. is a comprehensive resource conservation plan designed to mitigate development impacts on protected animal and plant species within a defined study area. The plan is an essential component of a Federal Endangered Species Act section 10(a) permit from the U.S. Department of Interior, which would allow the incidental "take" of endangered species.
- Q.** Why is an H.C.P. needed for Metro Bakersfield?
- A.** The H.C.P. ensures protection of species habitat while allowing reasonable urban growth. A comprehensive approach is necessary to balance issues related to species protection and the economic health of the community.
- Q.** What area does the H.C.P. cover?
- A.** The Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (MBHCP) covers a 405-square-mile area of City of Bakersfield/County of Kern jurisdiction in and around Metropolitan Bakersfield. The plan boundary is the same boundary used for the joint city/county general plan. Development within the plan boundary is subject to the terms and benefits of the MBHCP, although habitat is purchased both inside and outside this boundary.
- Q.** How is the plan implemented?
- A.** Developers pay impact fees, which are placed in an account and can only be used for habitat acquisition and management. The MBHCP Implementation Trust Group is made up of representatives from the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern and assisted by wildlife agency and public advisors, reviews and approves habitat acquisition and monitors urban growth and conservation activities through quarterly reports.
- Q.** Is it working?
- A.** Yes. Since approval in late 1994, the trust group has acquired over 22,000 acres of endangered species habitat and is projected to be about four years ahead of habitat loss due to urbanization. The plan provides mitigation for environmental impacts to protected plant and animal species without delaying project processing or construction.